

Motorcycle Mentorship Program First of Its Kind in the Navy Southwest Region

January 13 was a lucky Friday for motorcycle riders at NAS North Island. On that day, the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment (AIMD) at NAS North Island implemented a mandatory motorcycle-mentorship program (MMP). AIMD is the only command under Commander Navy Region, Southwest (CNRSW) that has an MMP for its Sailors who ride motorcycles.

“The Secretary of Defense wanted to reduce mishaps by 50 percent, and this is what we’re doing to play our part,” said Chief Aviation Electronics Technician (AW) Daniel Gamet, AIMD sea operational detachment coordinator, who created the MMP and is also a mentor within the program. The Navy requires Sailors to complete a Motorcycle Safety Foundation course once they receive their license or permit. Gamet said that commands should require further safety training of their Sailors if they want to prevent motorcycle mishaps.

“Unfortunately, the Navy already has exceeded the Secretary of Defense’s challenge to reduce private motor-vehicle fatalities for fiscal year 2006; [the Navy] already has 38 fatalities, but the ceiling is 23—and it’s only February,” said Gamet.

The AIMD MMP consists of three levels for a Sailor: beginner, intermediate and mentor. However, Gamet said, the program doesn’t have a completion date, because mentorship is an ongoing learning process, even for the instructors. The mentors teach most of the program in a classroom environment, focusing on safety and proper use, but the highlight of the program is “group ride” day. He also said that the detachment authorized one working day out of the month for mentors to take their pupils on an observed safety ride.

“You can talk about motorcycles all day long, but, until you ride one, you don’t know what you’re doing,” said Gamet. Participants in the MMP don’t have to take part in the “group ride,” but they can’t advance in the program if they decline. Aviation Electronics Technician Third Class Eric Bloom, who is a beginner in the MMP, doesn’t think this will be a problem, though. He said most participants look forward to the group ride, and he sees a positive future for the MMP. “I think once the program gets standardized, it really will excel,” said Bloom.

Commander Thomas Straub, AIMD officer in charge, hopes Gamet’s MMP instruction eventually will be used as a template for the entire Navy. “It would make sense to adopt a mandatory [motorcycle] mentorship program. The other services have it, and they’ve seen a decline in mishaps,” said Straub.

Currently, Naval Base Coronado has the highest number of



Naval Safety Center Photo

motorcycle mishaps in the CNRSW region. CNRSW is interested in obtaining an instruction from Gamet consisting of a minimum set of MMP guidelines to possibly implement throughout the region.

“If we continue training our Sailors the same way we have in the past, we will have difficulties meeting the mishap-reduction goals mandated by the secretary of the Navy,” said Steven Martin, traffic-safety program manager for CNRSW. “With a proactive approach to training, like the program Gamet has been spearheading, we can take an aggressive posture in attempting to reduce mishaps by education and a positive leadership example.”

— JO1 Frank E. Neely, Jr.
COMMANDER, NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Editor’s note: As of printing, 52 Sailors and 35 Marines have died in PMV-related crashes.



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The Quest for Learning Never Ends for Drivers and Riders

Back to the Basics

Whether used as a chance for drivers to keep the privilege of driving on base or a refresher for instructors to maintain certification, courses generally are available at all major naval installations.

Driver Improvement Program (DIP) Course



What It Is: Reinforces positive attitudes and motivates people who have been found at fault in a traffic mishap while operating a motor vehicle on base.

Who Takes It: Military and civilian personnel who are cited for an offense while driving private-motor vehicles on naval installations must attend this course as a condition of continued authorized use of their vehicle on base.

Local command policy also may require individuals to take a refresher DIP course, or upon transfer from another activity.

How To Get It: The Naval Safety Center recommends the American Automobile Association's Driver Improvement Program (AAA DIP).

AAA DIP Instructor Training

What It Is: Offers certification to new AAA DIP instructors or renewal of active instructors' three-year qualification.

Who Takes It: Anyone responsible for training or traffic safety, or who serve in a position that includes traffic-safety duties. Military personnel also should have at least 24 months left at their present duty station.

Cost: Attendance is free (other than travel and per diem). The command offering the training must purchase the materials.

How To Get It: Commands interested in offering this training must have a certified instructor on board. To offer certification to additional personnel, contact the Naval Safety Center for a quota.

Emergency Vehicle Operator's Course (EVOC)

What It Is: Prepares individual drivers to operate police vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks, and crash and rescue vehicles safely, both when responding to emergencies and during other

driving. The initial EVOC is a 40-hour instructional program for students. After taking the instructional program, operators must complete a Safety Center-approved 16-hour refresher program every three years.

Who Takes It: Drivers of Navy police vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks, and crash and rescue vehicles.



How To Get It: Individual EVOC courses for fire, police, and ambulance operators are generally available at all major naval installations. Contact the Naval Safety Center Motor-Vehicle Division at (757) 444-3520, Ext. 7602.

Motorcycle Safety Course

Note: The term "motorcycle" applies to motorcycles, motor scooters, and motorized bicycles.

What It Is: Motorcycle training for new riders and refresher training for returning riders. Local command policy may require refresher training after deployment.



Who Should Take It: Active-duty Navy personnel on or off base, Navy civilian personnel in a duty status on or off base, and all others who choose to ride a motorcycle on a Navy installation.

Cost: All required training that DoD-trained or certified instructors shall be provided at no cost to military or DoD civilian personnel.

How To Get It: Naval Safety Center conducts motorcycle-safety courses. Contact the Motor-Vehi-

cle Division at (757) 444-3520, Ext. 7602 or Motorcycle Safety Foundation at (800) 446-9227.

Motorcycle Safety Instructor Training

What It Is: Provides certification to selected individuals nominated by their commands to teach the Motorcycle Safety Foundation *Motorcycle-Rider Course: Riding and Street Skills (MRC:RSS)*

Who Should Take It: Candidates who own a motorcycle, have a minimum of two years riding experience, and have successfully completed (within the 12 months prior to nomination) the *MRC: RSS*.

Course Requirements: Provide own motorcycle, if within an eight-hour ride of the host command; furnish and use required personal protective equipment; possess the ability and skill to complete exercises; are mentally and physically sound; and are able pass the knowledge test with a minimum score of 80 percent.

Cost: None (other than per diem and travel).

How To Get It: The Naval Safety Center offers the Motorcycle Safety Instructor Preparation (IP) Navywide.

For more information on these training programs, contact the Naval Safety Center Motor Vehicle Division at (757) 444-3520, Ext. 7602 (DSN 564)

II MEF Commands Set Up Motorcycle Clubs

Can you handle
the reins on
this horse?



Every command within II Marine Expeditionary Force is starting to establish motorcycle-club programs to ensure all Marines and Sailors maintain and enhance their knowledge and safety skills when riding.

With the constant rate of Marines and Sailors returning from Iraq, more and more service members are spending the well-merited money earned throughout their deployment. A prominent trend is purchasing motorcycles, regardless of whether the individual ever has situated himself behind a pair of handlebars.

“You don’t go out and buy a Suzuki Hayabusa 1300cc bike,” said Sgt. Joaquin Dejesus, ground safety manager for 2nd Marine Logistics Group. “The bottom line is: Don’t get a bike that you can’t handle. Don’t go above your head.”

According to II MEF Policy Letter 03–06, written by Lt. Gen. James F. Amos, II MEF commanding general, “Command clubs should conduct monthly meetings during on-duty hours for all participants in order to keep new and current members abreast of relevant developments with training opportunities, upcoming club events, and rides, as well as to establish a sense of cohesion and purpose.”

“There have been too many accidents this fiscal year,” Dejesus said. “There is a lot of inexperience out there, so I think this program will bring a lot to the table.”

Previously, commands only kept records on which Marines and Sailors owned motorcycles. Handling skills of riders never

were taken into account—a feature that will be a key ingredient of the new clubs.

“I intend to immediately capitalize on our seasoned and experienced motorcycle riders in every command, down to the battalion and squadron level,” said Amos in his policy letter. “Command motorcycle clubs will be designed to promote enjoyable, responsible and mature driving behavior for all II MEF motorcycle riders in order to drastically reduce the number of mishaps.”

Besides mandatory monthly meetings, there will be other planned events to make the club more enjoyable, according to the policy letter. Group rides during working on-duty hours, such as Friday afternoon, are encouraged.

According to Dejesus, if you own a motorcycle, regardless if you drive it on base or not, you will be required to join the club and attend the monthly meetings.

“This club is like a mentorship program to a certain extent,” Dejesus said. “It is geared for officers and senior enlisted, who may have more riding experience, to help the inexperienced learn more about what they are riding.”

For more information on motorcycle clubs, contact your respective units’ bike representative or ground safety manager.

— Lance Cpl. Joel Abshier
2ND MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP